



10 mins

Objective and Musical Focus

Playing as an ensemble; Dynamics; Conducting

Instruments?

Body percussion, optional untuned percussion

Accessibility

Suitable for Vision, Hearing and Cognitive impairments with minor adaptation.

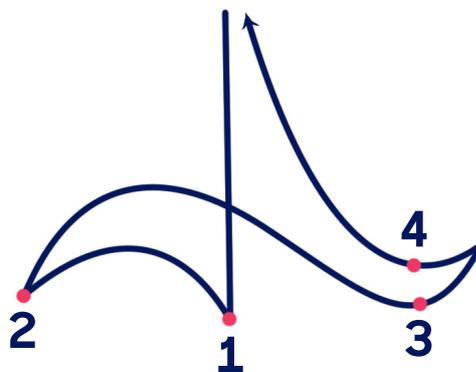
1. Warm up Activity

1, 2, 3, 4

This is a simple game that uses the four beat conducting pattern to teach children about pulse and conducting skills. You can watch this activity demonstrated in the Teacher Techniques video collection.

Firstly, teach the children the four beat conducting pattern. When starting to learn the pattern, encourage the children to say the beat numbers out loud while also moving their hands. Once they're comfortable with this, challenge them to stop saying the numbers out loud, but keep the hand movements going at a steady pulse.

The image below shows the pattern for right handed conductors. Move your hand down for the first beat, then towards your body for beat 2, outwards for beat 3 and back up for beat 4.



Once the children have got to grips with this, try conducting using different tempos.

Now ask the children to clap or play their instrument on one of the beat numbers, while you conduct. Make sure that while you are conducting the pulse is steady and remains the same so there are no changes in tempo.

Now choose a different number to make a sound on (this could be the same sound as before or a different one).





Explain to your class that in music, a conductor is the person who stands at the front of the musicians and helps them know when to play, what speed to go, how loud or quietly (dynamics) to play and what the mood of the music should be.



Show the children some tips of conductors on action! Have a class discussion and agree on 4 different gestures a conductor could do to tell the musicians to:

- Start playing.
- Stop playing.
- Play loudly.
- Play quietly.

There aren't any specific rules here, although you often find conductors pointing to musicians when they want them start playing, having closed fists to tell them to stop, big gestures to get them to play loudly and small gestures to get them to play quietly.

Give the children some time to practise the conducting gestures you have come up with.

When getting a section to start playing, encourage the conductor to shout out '1, 2,' like YolanDa does in the song, before that section then plays the 'there's something 'bout that noise' rhythm.

Now split your class ensemble into between 4 and 6 sections and choose a conductor who will lead your class ensemble playing the rhythm above.



To help the conductor, the teacher ought to keep a steady pulse using a drum or other suitably loud instrument. This will help the ensemble to play the rhythm in time together.

Repeat the above exercise but the class and conductor playing along to the backing song to *Something 'Bout That Noise*. Once the rhythm starts it should be repeated all the way until the end of the song, with the conductor experimenting with starting and stopping of different sections and controlling how loud and quiet they play.



When doing the call and response technique, try and keep a steady pulse throughout.

4. Troubleshooting

Notice in the video YolanDa counts the band in with 1, 2, before singing the line 'there's something 'bout that noise'. You can do this too when teaching your class this line.

Also, try using body language and gesture to communicate when it is your turn to sing (for example pointing to yourself) and when it is the children's turn (point to them).

When playing along to the song, it doesn't matter if the conductor is bringing in the rhythm at different times to the original. As long as the conductor says '1,2,' out loud, before they want a particular section to play the rhythm it will fit with the pulse of the music.

The conductor should be encouraged to do at least 2 rhythms with the same section before moving onto the next as this gives them chance to play with dynamics.

Curriculum Links

Science



Key words

Body Percussion: sounds made using your body.

Conductor: the leader of a group of musicians.

Dynamics: the volume of a sound.

Unpitched Percussion: percussion instruments that don't have pitches, for example a drum or wood block.

Pulse: a steady beat, like a ticking clock.

Rhythm: a pattern of long and short sounds.

Tempo: the speed of the music.